

Speech by Singapore Red Cross Chairman Mr Tan Kai Hoe, at the Singapore Red Cross 50th Annual General Meeting on 24 June 2024 at Red Cross House, Hall of Humanity

Fellow Singapore Red Cross Members

Fellow Council Members

Ladies & Gentlemen

Good evening. Thank you for joining us at the Singapore Red Cross 50th Annual General Meeting.

2023 has been a year marked by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. We had to navigate geo-political conflicts, climate disasters, the residual effects of COVID-19, inflation and market disruptions. In Singapore, there was growing attention to our ageing or 'super-aged' population.

Impactful Programmes

Nevertheless, the Singapore Red Cross remained on track to expand the footprint of our local humanitarian services. Responding to the ageing population, our ElderAid clientele doubled from 600 in 2022 to 1,200 seniors in 2023. We also scaled up our Home Monitoring and Eldercare service, from 300 to 700 clients in 2023. Our Singapore Red Cross Academy's Centre for First Aid and Life Support opened its sixth premise at Woods Square to enhance accessibility to our training programmes. Our Centre for Psychosocial Support grew its course offerings with an extended range of psychosocial courses. We engaged migrant workers in physical and mental wellness activities and programmes. As the National Blood Donor Recruiter, we forged strategic partnerships with the government, public and private sector and organisations to advance the lifesaving cause. The cornerstones of the revamped Red Cross Youth curriculum will focus on the mental well-being of youth, climate resilience and sustainability, blood donation advocacy, and service learning. Beyond our shores,

besides our ready response to several national and man-made crises, we bolstered capacity-building initiatives for National Societies in Southeast Asia and beyond.

To deliver these humanitarian services, we rely on well-trained and committed volunteers. In 2023, we launched the 'Responder for Resilience' programme to train 1,000 volunteers for programmes such as Community Befriending, HoME+ and Community First Aid. I am glad that we were able to recruit more than 800 volunteers for this programme. We will continue recruiting, training and developing volunteers for our local and international programmes.

Building on Solid Foundations

To deliver our humanitarian services consistently and sustainably, strong foundations - governance, financial management and manpower development are imperative.

In 2023, the Singapore Red Cross received the Charity Transparency Award. It affirmed our commitment to good governance, effective stewardship, accountability and transparency. This accolade is a testament to the consistent efforts of the Board and Management to ensure sound leadership, imbuing confidence in the public that the funds entrusted to us are channelled to their intended causes.

To strengthen our manpower pool, we have stepped up our efforts on recruitment, development and retention of our employees and volunteers, prioritising talent development to optimise their potential while at the same time enriching the employee and volunteer experience. We have implemented robust HR policies. To ensure continuity, we incorporated succession planning to develop and pave the way for SRC's next generation of leaders. New key appointments include the Assistant Secretary General/Operations, Assistant Secretary General/Corporate, Group Director and Dean for the SRC Academy, and Group Director for the Blood Donor Programme.

Embracing new frontiers, we leveraged digital platforms and technology to ramp up our critical IT infrastructure. Besides assimilating our IT systems, we adopted digitalised donation platforms. At the same time, we have taken measures to protect the SRC against data breaches, online scams and other illegal activities. We have therefore established a risk management framework, including a Risk Management Committee. These collective efforts will safeguard our assets, ensure a good reputation, optimise our data management, mitigate risks, and put us in a position to seize new opportunities.

In October 2023, the President reopened the refurbished Red Cross House. Besides providing employees with a refreshing physical work environment, the renovated building incorporated green features like solar panels and a rainwater harvesting tank. We also embarked on sustainability efforts focused on retaining, recycling, regenerating and repurposing.

Partnerships

As part of our vision of bringing organisations together to serve humanity, we established meaningful collaborations with various partners who have enhanced our services and reach across the board. Our Blood Donor Programme has formed fruitful partnerships with community groups such as CSSCOM - Combat Service Support Command, the Neo Group, and the Community Emergency Engagement Committees of the People's Association, among others. These partnerships have enabled us to expand our reach and garner more support for our cause, thereby strengthening our National Blood Programme

Harnessing the power of humanity, the Centre for Psychosocial Support also formed strategic partnerships with some government agencies and corporate partners such as Temasek Foundation to empower 1,500 SG Secure Responders with PFA skills to boost their confidence and readiness to assist those in need. Our Community Engagement section also forges partnerships with other charities to amplify our local services.

Meaningful partnerships will remain a cornerstone of SRC to amplify our impact and foster a collaborative spirit in the community

Thought Leadership

Besides our services, the SRC has also endeavoured to be a thought leader. As part of our efforts to champion women's role and leadership in the humanitarian sector, we organised the inaugural Southeast Asia Red Cross Red Crescent Women Conference 2023. We promoted pandemic preparedness through the inaugural Pandemic Readiness Enhancement Programme for the Southeast Asia Red Cross, and Red Crescent Societies and the Singapore Humanitarian Conference. In collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, we reaffirmed our commitment to mental wellness and mental health by jointly organising the Southeast Asia Training of Trainers on Psychological First Aid.

Dedicated to the promotion and advocacy of International Humanitarian Law, we collaborated closely with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Centre for International Law of the National University of Singapore (CIL-NUS) to stage the second International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Roundtable themed 'Protection of the Environment in Times of Armed Conflict'.

These collective efforts consolidate our position as a thought leader in the humanitarian field.

Looking Ahead

We will continue to embrace a learning culture geared towards a positive growth mindset. We will leverage innovative processes and technology to shore up our Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) efforts, and forge enduring partnerships with the government, public, and private sectors to advance our humanitarian cause.

To conclude, I thank the Council Members for their insightful guidance, mentorship and support. We recognise the commitment, contributions, and camaraderie of the Management team and employees, and the invaluable contributions of the volunteers, partners, donors, and supporters. We are grateful to you, our stakeholders, for your solidarity and unwavering support. You have served as a catalyst, empowering us to make a meaningful impact on the community. We look forward to your support at our 75th Anniversary celebration roadshows in September and October, and for many more years ahead.

Thank you.